

Two Cubs and a Baby

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Summary: Simba and Nala come across an abandoned baby, and take him in as a child of their own until his mother is found. However, they discover that being a parent has its stressful moments...

***Chapter 1*: Chapter 1: Darkness That Never Ends**

AN: I'm back... from the dead! Nah, I'm just joking, as always. Here's the next story, which is supposed to be funny. But first, a depressing chapter you can cry over. Sunny days...

Two Cubs and a Baby

Chapter One: Darkness That Never Ends

"Simba, it's a pleasure to see you again," Hago told Simba, using that cruel smile that always managed to frighten the Prince of the Pride Lands. "Well, it might not be a pleasure for you, but it's certainly a pleasure for me."

The flames. It was always the flames. Again and again. Every night was the same. Same surroundings, same Hago, but the conversation was always different. It never stopped. Hago had haunted Simba's mind ever since that climatic battle where he was killed, but Simba failed to learn why. Why wouldn't Hago ever stop taunting him? The question needed an answer. Simba deserved an answer. Why wouldn't it ever stop? Why?

"I'm sure you understand why it's a pleasure," Hago continued. "Because I can hurt you again, just like the last time, and all the times before that. I must admit it's rather fun. It's entertaining to see the suffering you will experience. And the best thing is, every time you go to sleep, it won't ever stop. Not ever."

Simba did the same thing he did every time when he had this nightmare: he became a terrified wreck, fearing Hago with every inch of his body. He looked so menacing, so frightening, especially with all those surrounding flames. There was no escape, just like the previous twenty-three times this had happened.

"J-just go away," Simba stammered, backing away as far as he could without touching the searing flames. One touch and he would be burnt to a crisp. Everything in this sadistic dream world was so hazardous. Why couldn't he have a pleasant dream for once? Before Hago died, all of his dreams were filled with happy thoughts. Thoughts about the lovely times he could experience with Nala, his one true love.

"You know I can't do such a thing, Simba," Hago informed the terrified cub, taking a menacing step closer – just like he did every night. It felt so good to terrorise Simba. He'd get the same response every night, and it gave him nothing but pure pleasure. It was all he had left. Everything else was gone, consumed by the very same flames that had killed him. Hago was very much dead, but that didn't stop him from trying to destroy his greatest enemy. Even in death, Hago knew he could have the last laugh.

"I'm never going to leave. I love this too much," Hago continued, grinning evilly. "I love to make you unhappy, Simba. Especially after everything you did to me. You ruined all of the great plans I had for my life. All the things I wanted to do, and you stole all of them away from me. And I'm never ever going to get them back. It'll be this way for ever."

"Why don't you s-stop?" Simba asked, feeling himself beginning to shake with fear. It wouldn't be long before Hago would do what he always did: advance towards him and presumably kill him. Simba knew he would wake up, but that didn't deter him from being utterly terrified by this fictional situation.

"Because I have nothing, Simba," Hago explained, taking another step closer. "Do you understand what that means? Nothing."

"Y-you're dead!" Simba shouted, feeling tears welling up in his eyes. "This isn't happening! I don't believe any of this!"

"Oh, this is very real, Simba," Hago revealed. "Real for me, at least. Oh so very real. This little 'nightmare' you have every night is all I have. It's our last real memory together. You, me and the flames. This is all I can do, Simba. And if that's all I get then I'm going to take it."

"W-what are you t-talking about?" Simba sobbed, not understanding any of this. Why did Hago always have to be so cryptic? Did he ever explain things like a normal person would? Then again, Hago was never exactly normal.

"There's nothing else for me, Simba," Hago replied, a sad smile – the saddest Simba had ever seen in his life – forming on his face. "I'm dead. Do you know what that entails?"

Simba shook his head. "No. If you're dead, then how are you here? It doesn't make sense. None of it does."

"Death is nothing, Simba. Do you understand that? That's all you get. Nothing. All you get when you die is the darkness. The darkness that never ends. You get nothing for all of eternity. Just the dark and the cold. Fear is all there is. Not for

you, of course. The good people like you have a Heaven up high waiting for you when you finally pass on. But as for me... all I get is the darkness. So here I am, giving some of the darkness to you. Now do you understand?"

"Please, don't," Simba pleaded, backing away a bit more. He could feel the heat of the flames – they almost burnt him just by standing close to them. Simba knew what was coming next. The climax to this horrible nightmare, where Hago plunged Simba into darkness. Darkness that would never end. If that was what bad people got when they died, then Simba was never going to do a bad thing ever again. "I-I don't want this. Please!"

"That's too bad, Simba," Hago said as he advanced closer and closer, scaring Simba more and more with each passing step. "That's a crying shame. But really, you should have thought about this before you killed me... shouldn't you?"

With one final, furious roar, Hago pounced at Simba. The terrified cub closed his eyes and felt his soul being torn from his body as his world – his life – was plunged into total darkness.

Those two seconds of darkness were horrible. Those two seconds felt like infinity to Simba. It was so horrible. Hago was right. It was just the dark, and the cold. All he had was fear. Pure, cruel, unrelenting fear. It felt like everything had been stolen from him.

This was what Hago went through every day, if days even existed in the darkness. The mere thought of suffering this for ever and ever made Simba want to shout and cry and the top of his voice. He would be so loud that his lung would burst. It was that horrible.

"Until tomorrow, Simba..." Simba heard Hago's voice echo throughout the darkness as he felt himself began to wake up from the nightmare.

The worst thing was that Simba knew this would happen every time he went to sleep.

"Simba..." Nala called as she prodded him, wishing he would just wake up. When he wanted to be, Simba could be a very heavy sleeper. There was no telling when he would wake up. Sometimes he could be full of energy, and other times he could be the most tired cub in the world. Nala figured that Simba should try and balance his energy levels, if that was even possible for him. He was full of surprises.

"Nala..." Simba called back in the same tone. "I'm awake, you know. You can stop prodding and start cuddling."

Nala was happy to oblige when it came to close contact with her boyfriend and best friend – she liked to think of Simba as both. Nala snuggled up to Simba, curious as to why he was asking for a little bit of a cuddle. "So, what's the special occasion?"

"Oh, it's nothing," Simba replied, bad memories of his nightmare returning to him. "It's just that I had this... nightmare earlier, that's all. It kinda freaked me out."

"What kind of nightmare?" Nala asked. She knew Simba had a problem with nightmares – this was most likely because of all the danger he'd been involved in at such a young age. It never seemed to stop him from sleeping, though.

"I don't want to talk about it," Simba responded, looking away from Nala. Out of all those Hago nightmares, that one was by far the worst. He'd never felt so scared in his entire life, and there was one thing he couldn't help but wonder about.

Would it get even worse?

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: Full of Good

Chapter Two: Full of Good

"Come on, Simba," Nala urged, smiling at him. "You know you can tell me anything. We can keep a secret, right?"

Simba found himself automatically staring into Nala's beautiful teal eyes, and admiring her kind, inviting smile. Oh, now he *had* to tell her. You couldn't say no to a person as kind and caring as Nala. You could tell her anything, and she would listen attentively. Simba didn't think anyone else like that even existed in the world. At least, not to him.

Simba gave her a little smile. "Fine. I'll tell ya. But you have to promise me something. You can't tell anyone else, okay?"

Nala nodded. "Okay, Simba. I promise I won't tell anyone. What is it?" she asked, knowing that Simba was hiding something. Even though he seemed his usual self, Nala could tell that he was hiding his true feelings right now. That's how well she knew Simba. There was no way he could fool her. Something was troubling him, and Nala knew it was her job to find out what.

"Well, you see, I keep having this nightmare where..." Simba hesitated for a moment, swallowing his sentence. He thought about not even telling her, but then he remembered that he could trust Nala with his life. He'd feel a lot better if someone else knew, and who should know but Nala?

He compared it to the time he'd spent when he was hiding his deep crush he had on her. For a good few months, Simba and Nala had been the best of friends, and had secretly been hiding their true feelings for each other. Simba found it so hard to tell her, because there was always this nagging feeling in the back of his mind that things would go horribly wrong. He feared that Nala would hate him if he told her. The fear that she'd never ever want to see him again.

Of course, it didn't turn out like that in the end. Nala loved him back, and they were now a very happy couple. He was very glad that he told her. If he didn't, then Simba concluded that he would have died of love sickness.

Just tell her, Simba ordered himself, before he finally spoke again. "In the nightmare, I'm in this place with all these flames surrounding me. There's no way out, and I'm always terrified of who's there with me."

Nala raised an eyebrow. "Who's there with you?" she asked, curious. This was going to be something bad. She could tell. Simba looked petrified right now, and this was all because of a nightmare? Just how bad was it?

"Hago," Simba revealed, causing Nala to gasp in surprise. Hago? It was Hago who was in his nightmare? Why was that? Hago was long gone. He was dead. For ever. It wasn't like he was going to suddenly come back from the dead to kill them. What was there to worry about?

"He walks right through the flames, and says all this scary stuff – most of it being about how much of a loser I am. And then, he kills me. I think," he added, scratching his head in confusion at that last part. Did Hago really kill him? Or did he send him into that awful place? The void full of nothing but darkness. Endless darkness.

"Oh, Simba..." Nala said sympathetically, putting a comforting paw on his shoulder. "You don't need to worry about Hago any more. He's dead. He's not ever coming back."

"I know," Simba told her. "But it doesn't stop. It never stops. It's always the same nightmare, over and over again. I don't think I *can* stop it." Simba bowed his head, looking down at the ground sadly. He'd have to deal with this for the rest of his life. He was never going to get a good night's sleep ever again.

"Why do you think you keep having it?" Nala enquired, feeling really sorry for him. She didn't want to see Simba go through something as depressing as this. He deserved a lot more than that. Instead, all he seemed to get was nothing but depression. Would something good happen to him for once?

"In the nightmare, Hago told me that it's the only thing he can do, now that he's dead. All he can do is scare me. Because... there's nothing else for him. When he died, all he had was... nothing. He has to live in darkness for ever. He says that's all bad people get. Just the dark. And I really, really *hate* the dark. What if I'm next, Nala? What if one day I die, and that's all I get?"

Nala stared into his handsome auburn eyes, and smiled. "That's *never* going to happen, Simba. You're nothing but good. You're the sweetest, kindest, most loving, wonderful cub I've ever met. There's not one evil thing about you. If there *was* then I wouldn't have fallen in love with you." She put a paw on Simba's chest, where his heart was. "There's nothing but good in here, Simba. Never tell yourself anything different."

Simba's mouth was wide open, surprised at how much Nala believed in him. No one had ever really told him anything like that. Nala had nothing but faith in him, and wouldn't let anyone convince her otherwise. She was the kindest soul on the planet.

Simba hugged her, smiling properly for the first time that morning. "Thanks, Nala," he told her. "I feel a lot better already."

"Then let's go have some fun," she said, gesturing towards the den opening. "We'll have a relaxing day. Would you like that?"

Simba nodded. "Yeah. Yeah, I would."

"Then let's get out of here," she said, heading out of the den. "It's too hot to stay inside. Do you want to go to the water hole? I bet the water's nice and cold."

"The water hole sounds great to me." Simba nodded, and joined Nala by her side. "Just make sure I don't try to breathe underwater. You know what happened last time."

Nala giggled. "Yeah. It was pretty funny, if you ignore the fact that you almost died."

The two of them laughed as they walked away from Pride Rock. Simba felt happy again, forgetting all about that awful nightmare.

A nice, quiet, peaceful day with Nala. No distractions at all. That sounded perfect. It would take his mind off of things. No worries, no fears and no stress. Today wouldn't be so bad after all.

Unfortunately, Simba would soon discover that today was going to be the total opposite of peaceful and stress-free.

AN: Cuteness to the max! But that first chapter was depressing, wasn't it? I did warn you it was going to get darker. Just wait until the next few stories come round the corner. Sadness aside, the next few chapter are shaping up to be interesting, right? Simba and Nala, the cutest cubs in the world, will soon be parents. I'll leave you alone now, so your mind can comprehend that.

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: A Crazy Thing to Say

AN: Time for an interesting conversation between Tama and Tojo. It might just be the last time you see Tama acting nice...

Chapter Three: A Crazy Thing to Say

"Did I just hear you right?" Tojo asked, not believing for a second what Tama had just told him. It was impossible. It was illogical. It was stupid. But he really, really, *really* wished it were true.

Not that it would be true, of course. Tojo was just hearing things. Tama never really said anything to him. His crazy mind had gone into overtime, and now he was just imagining happy scenarios where he didn't have to suffer day in, day out. There was no way Tama had told him that he—

"Tojo, I don't want you to be my slave anymore," Tama repeated. "Can it make it sound any clearer than that? Do you want me to shout and scream at the top of my voice so everyone in the kingdom can hear?"

"No, no, no," Tojo replied, holding his paws up. "It's just that this is... a little crazy. Actually, it's more than that – it's *insane*. Did you wake up one morning to find yourself with someone else's brain? Someone who actually had a little bit of sympathy for me? Or are you ill? Do you have a temperature?" Tojo put a paw on Tama's forehead, narrowing his eyes.

Tama pushed his paw away, frowning. "Tojo, I'm not ill, and I haven't gone crazy either. I've decided that you are no longer my slave. I am freeing you."

Tojo's eyes widened when he realised that Tama really meant it. Sure, it was crazy and unnatural for her, but he was free now! He could do whatever he wanted to!

"But... why?" Tojo asked, confused as to why Tama was suddenly deciding to free him. "Why would you want to free me? I thought you were going to make me be your slave for ever?"

"I've decided against it," Tama told him. "After all, you're of no use to me as a slave. I make you do far too much work for me. Now that I've freed you, we can be partners together."

Tojo raised an eyebrow. "Partners?" he exclaimed. "Now, what exactly do you mean by 'partners'? Is that just your fancy way of saying 'extreme slavery'?"

Tama shook her head. "No, no, no. Don't be so stupid, Tojo. I've decided that if we become partners then I'll stand a better chance of making Simba my boyfriend. Don't you think so too, Tojo?"

"Let me get this straight: you have now made us both equal, so we can work together to make the Prince your boyfriend?" Tojo considered arguing against that for a moment, but instead shrugged, not really caring. "Beats carrying you around the place and massaging your paws, I guess."

"That's the idea," said Tama, nodding. "Think of what we can achieve by working together! First, I'll make Simba my boyfriend, then I'll become Queen of the Pride Lands, and then I shall enslave the world!" Tama laughed evilly at the top of her voice.

"I lost you at that whole 'enslaving the world' part," Tojo told her, collapsing onto his back and looking up at the bright blue sky. "Somehow I think that two cubs like you and me will find that difficult to achieve."

"Okay, okay, so I was kidding about enslaving the world," Tama said, as she lay beside Tojo. "But I can still make myself the Queen. I'll be the most powerful Queen the Pride Lands has ever seen!"

"So, *if* – and I will repeat that word – *if* you do become the future Queen, what will that make me?" Tojo asked. There had better be some kind of reward in this for him, or this was going to be a very disappointing partnership.

"Oh, I don't know, the jester or something," Tama replied quickly, not really concerned about such trivial matters.

"The *jester*?" Tojo exclaimed in surprise, before frowning. "Gee, thanks, Tama. That's what I always wanted. You have the purest heart in the world."

"I know," Tama agreed, not picking up on Tojo's sarcasm. "I'm just a very nice person, aren't I?"

Tojo sighed. "Yes, Tama. You're very nice. I'm proud to be your new partner," he said sarcastically, only earning a wide grin from Tama. "So, what's the first job in this... 'partnership'?"

"Oh, I don't know," Tama answered, rolling onto her stomach and looking around the field they were in. "I haven't really thought of anything yet. All I was concentrating today on was making you my new partner."

Tojo closed his eyes. "Oh, well. If there's no work to be done then I'm happy. I'll just take a nap for a few hours. We were up pretty late last night."

"Tojo, tell me a bedtime story," Tama instructed. "Preferably one filled with lots of death, and horrible things happening to nice people."

"Bedtime story?" said Tojo. "It's the middle of the afternoon, Tama. Wouldn't a bedtime story be more appropriate for... well, *bedtime*?"

"Don't be silly," Tama replied. "Now get on with the story."

"I don't have to follow your orders anymore, Tama," Tojo reminded her. "You can't boss me around like you used to."

"I'm not ordering, I'm *requesting*. Come on, Tojo. Just a quick little story to help me get some sleep."

Tojo rolled his eyes and sighed. "Fine. I'll tell you a story." Tojo cleared his throat. "Once upon a time there was a cub called Tama, and she killed everyone in the entire world. The end. There we go. Nighty night." Tojo closed his eyes immediately, and tried to get to sleep.

"Tojo, that's not a proper story!" Tama argued. "Although it was nice of you to include me as the main character, but that's not the point! Tell me a *proper* story!"

All she got in reply from Tojo were a few snores. He had fallen asleep already! "Tojo? Tojo! You wake up right now, mister, or I'll... do something. Yeah! What do you think about that, huh?"

Tojo didn't say a word, and continued to sleep. Tama sighed, and lay beside him again.

The relationship Tama and Tojo had was a funny one, that was for sure. No one could really tell what they saw each other as. Were they enemies, or friends, or acquaintances? No one really knew. At times Tama seemed to really like Tojo, but then at other times she seemed to despise him more than anything else in existence. It really was crazy.

So what was the *real* reason Tama told Tojo that he was no longer her slave? Well, it was because she felt sorry for him. *Really* sorry. There was a time when she wouldn't feel sorry for anyone or anything, but that felt like a long time ago now.

A few days ago, she realised that she had been really horrible to Tojo. She'd treated him like a piece of dirt, and she slowly came to realise that she shouldn't have done that to someone as nice as him. He didn't deserve it. He didn't deserve any of it. The poor guy shouldn't have even been her slave in the first place. They could have been good friends together. *Great* friends! But instead, she'd decided to take advantage of how sensitive and exploitable he was. That more or less made her a monster.

Tama decided the logical thing to do would be to make Tojo her partner. That more or less made them proper friends now. That sounded good to Tama. She was right – they could accomplish a lot together.

Nothing more than friends, Tama assured herself. *Not even that – partners. I don't want things getting complicated.*

Of course, her feelings were always going to win over her mind, no matter what she told herself.

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Loud, Loud Crying

Chapter Four: Loud, Loud Crying

"Pinned ya!" Nala declared, pinning Simba down for the fifth time that afternoon. They were having a peaceful time beside the water hole, and it didn't seem like anything was going to go wrong today. That was a nice change.

Normally, Simba and Nala spent their days trying to protect the Pride Lands from the latest maniac. Their parents always seemed none the wiser to any of this. Why couldn't *they* sort out a problem like that for once? Instead it was up to she and Simba. They could be doing better things, like what they were doing right now!

"That's the fifth time!" Simba exclaimed in disbelief. "Don't you ever get tired? Or are you cheating?"

She giggled. "Simba, how could I be cheating? It's *impossible* to cheat at this game. It's all about strength, and determination, and... lots of other important things which I'm too tired to mention right now. The point is this: you can't cheat at Pinned Ya!"

"All right, then let's make up another game we can play," Simba suggested, his eyes glinting with mischief.

"Okay. What did you have in mind?" Nala asked, wondering what kind of game Simba would come up with. She knew nothing would ever be able to top Pinned Ya! It was the best game in the world. Although sometimes she wondered if she only thought that because she was the master at it...

"Hmm..." Simba put a paw to his chin and thought for a moment. "How about... Tickled Ya!"

Nala was taken by surprise when Simba started to tickle her on her stomach. Oh, no... not there. Not on the stomach. *Anything* but that! That was the most ticklish spot on her body!

Nala started to laugh loudly, trying to wriggle away from Simba. As soon as Simba started tickling her there, she knew there was no way out. Once she started laughing, she couldn't stop.

"I think this a game I could get used to," Simba teased as he continued to tickle her. "What do you think, Nala? Is this a good game or what?"

"N-no!" Nala cried through laughter. "It's a t-terrible g-game! Why d-don't we s-stop and p-play something e-else?"

"Nah. I think it's kind of fun," he replied, smiling as Nala continued to laugh. "I like it when I win. Now I know how you feel when you pin me all the time."

"H-how long are you going to do this for?" she asked, wondering how long Simba would continue to torture her like this.

"Well, let's see. You pinned me five times, so I'll tickle you for... five minutes," Simba answered.

"*What?*" Nala squealed. "That's not fair!"

"Oh, all right then. Five *hours*. Is that fair enough for you?" He was loving every second of this. This would teach Nala never to pin him again! Now *he* was in control!

Not for long, though. Using the strength she still had, Nala pushed Simba as hard as he could, sending him flying into the water hole with a big *splash!* Nala breathed a sigh of relief, and collapsed onto her back, exhausted. "I'm glad that's over with!"

Simba emerged from the water, laughing. "Okay, that was pretty funny!" he exclaimed, finding the whole situation hilarious. He didn't expect that from Nala, but that only seemed to add to the funniness. "Right, Nala?"

Simba turned his head to look at Nala, and saw that she had fallen asleep. Simba shrugged as he swam over to the edge of the water hole. *I guess all that tickling took a lot out of her*, he thought, clambering onto dry land. He shook himself dry, and was about to wake Nala up when he heard a sound. A sound he didn't really expect to hear.

Crying. He could hear crying coming from somewhere nearby. Someone was crying, and they certainly didn't mind other people hearing it. Especially at *that* volume.

Simba narrowed his eyes. Why would someone be crying so loud? Most of the time, when people cried they tried to keep it all to themselves. They tried to be as quiet as possible. When he cried, Simba didn't particularly like other people hearing. He preferred to find a quiet spot to drown in his sorrows.

But whoever was crying right now was doing it really loudly. Simba was beginning to think that it was affecting his hearing.

Just who is that? Simba asked himself. *It doesn't sound like anyone I know*, he concluded. A few seconds later, a sly smile spread across his face. *But maybe I should find out. And then maybe I can find a way to make them stop crying.*

Simba looked over at Nala, and decided to give her a little rest. He'd go off on a little adventure of his own while she slept. She wouldn't even know he was gone. Plus, he'd have a story to tell her later. It would be one of those made-up stories Simba always told her, where he was the brave hero. Of course, Nala didn't believe any of those stories, but they still managed to entertain her.

Simba wandered off in the direction of the crying, which seemed to be coming from a rocky field in the distance. The sobs and cries echoed throughout the Pride Lands, and Simba was surprised that no one else had decided to investigate. Either everyone else was just being lazy, or Simba was going crazy. He preferred the former. Then again, a little part of his personality contained a bit of craziness...

Simba kept following the cries, which got louder and louder as he got closer and closer to the rocky field. There wasn't all that much to see. Just a lot of big rocks, and a lot of dirt, too. There were a few mud puddles around here he wouldn't mind getting dirty in...

But that could wait until later. He had a job to do. A secret mission. He had to find out where those cries were coming from.

Simba hopped on top of a large boulder, and surveyed his surroundings. He spotted a small cluster of rocks, and smiled. *That* was where the crying was coming from. It *had* to be coming from there!

Simba hopped from the boulder and over to the cluster of rocks. He hopped on top of a large one, and saw something really, really odd.

In amongst some small rocks, was the small, innocent body of a baby cub.

AN: Nice cliffhanger, eh? Simba's found a baby, and Tojo is no longer Tama's slave. Two shocks in two chapters! Ooh, I'm good!

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: A Baby?

AN: Time for our cubs to step up and become parents. That still sounds really weird... Anyway, sit back and enjoy the show! I mean story. You know what I mean!

Chapter Five: A Baby?

Simba stared down at the little baby cub, raising an eyebrow in confusion. The cub had big brown eyes, dark brown fur and a little tuft of brown fur on the top of his head. The small thing continued to cry, and Simba feared he would go deaf if it didn't stop soon.

A baby? Just what was a baby doing out here, all alone with nowhere to go? Simba looked around the rocky field. He couldn't see anyone nearby, so it seemed like this cub didn't have any parents. The poor little guy was all on his own.

Checking the area one more time to see if anyone was around, Simba decided to pick up the baby. "Hey there, little guy," he greeted him, smiling. "What's a baby like you doing all the way out here?"

The baby stared into Simba's friendly auburn eyes, and stopped crying. He nuzzled Simba's chest and smiled, immediately taking a liking to him. Simba chuckled in response. "Well, you're cute, aren't you?" he said, cuddling the baby back. "Almost as cute as me."

Well, he definitely likes me! Simba thought, still trying to figure out why the baby had ended up here in the first place. *I wonder why he ended up here? I don't recognise him, so he can't be from around here.* Simba continued to deliberate on how the baby had come to be here, when he came up with a suitable conclusion. *He must have gotten separated from his Mom. That's gotta be it! I mean, it can't be for any other reason. Who would leave a cute little guy like him out here all on his own? He definitely got lost.* Simba was happy with that. It seemed like a logical enough reason.

That just left one other important question: what was Simba going to do with the baby until his mother found him? *So what do I do with him now?* Simba asked himself, as the baby continued to cuddle him, as if he didn't want to let go of Simba for fear that he might suddenly disappear.

I can't just leave him here, Simba told himself, looking around the field. *Who knows what could happen to him?* Simba deliberated for a moment, when he thought of something he could do. It was something so crazy, and so insane, that it just might work.

Maybe I should take care of him? he suggested, even though he knew it was an odd idea. *It'll only be for a day or two. His Mom's gotta notice he's missing sooner or later, and she'll come here to take him back. I can handle a little baby for a while. I'm Prince Simba! I'm the expert at taking care of babies. I'll be like his Daddy.* He nodded in approval. *Yeah. I like the sound of that.*

Simba looked down at the baby and smiled. He placed the baby on his back, turned around and started making his way back towards the water hole. "Come on, little guy. Let's go and meet your new Mommy."

Nala's gonna love this, he thought to himself, carrying the baby on his back as he left the rocky field. *I can't wait to see the look on her face! She'll be a great Mom. I mean, how else is she gonna react?*

Nala couldn't believe what she was hearing. It was something she never expected – and didn't want – to hear at all. It didn't make sense. But that didn't mean it had no effect on her. As soon as it was said, it broke her heart. She was amazed the heart never made a sound when it snapped in two.

"Why are you staring at me like that?" Simba said cruelly. "I don't want you looking at me with your ugly face." He chuckled evilly. "You're such a loser, Nala."

Nala could only stare at Simba with a blank expression of shock. She really couldn't do anything else. She was so stunned that she felt paralysed. She literally felt fixed to the spot. This whole situation felt so... false. But at the same time it felt so true. Why was Simba acting like this?

"Simba, I..." she choked, trying desperately to fight back the tears.

"What?" Simba spat. "You can't believe I don't actually like you? Get real, Nala. I don't like you. In fact, I never liked you. Of course, since you're so stupid and worthless you never would have figured it out. You're not nearly smart enough."

"Simba, h-how can this be t-true?" Nala stammered. "Y-you said you l-liked me. You've said it lots of t-times! I thought w-we were..." She looked down at the ground sadly. "In love."

Simba let out a big laugh in response, and Nala felt sadder than she'd ever felt before. This was the worst day of her life. She didn't even feel like living anymore. Not after this.

"Nala, it was all just a trick," Simba revealed, causing Nala to gasp in shock. No! That couldn't be true! That wasn't possible! "I've been tricking you ever since we met each other. It's been really funny, to be honest."

"Why?" Nala asked, as tears finally began to leak from her eyes. "Why would you want to do something so horrible to me?"

"Because I hate you," he replied. "You're nothing. Nothing. I've never liked you, and I never will. You should just go and kill yourself. No one wants you around."

Nala began to sob and cry, collapsing to the ground. It was all a lie. She'd had so much trust and faith in Simba, and it turned out to all be one big joke for him. He was a liar! She wanted to say she hated him, but she knew she wouldn't. She still loved him, despite all of the lies. She knew that was stupid, but it didn't really matter. She'd become too attached to him.

"Aw, is little Nala upset?" Simba teased. "Well, go ahead and keep crying. I don't care, honestly. Don't expect me to take pity on you. You could cry blood and I wouldn't care. Not one bit. That's how much you mean to me. Like I said before – you're nothing."

"Simba, please—" she pleaded, before Simba rudely cut her off.

"Shut up!" he roared. "Your voice is so irritating. Every word you say just makes me want to hit you in the face! In fact, I think I will." Simba bared his teeth, and pounced at Nala.

The last thing she saw before she died was the pure hatred in Simba's eyes...

Nala shot up, breathing heavily from that horrible nightmare. I was... Nala looked around, and saw that she was still by the water hole. Oh. It was just a nightmare. Nala breathed a deep sigh of relief. Just a stupid, silly nightmare. I'm fine. I'm not dead.

"Hey, Nala!" she heard Simba call.

And Simba doesn't hate me, she thought with a smile. He still loves me. That's the most important thing. To me, at least.

Simba hurried over to Nala, grinning. "Hey, Nala, I've got something really cool to show you!"

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Naming the Baby

Chapter Six: Naming the Baby

Nala smiled at Simba, wondering what surprise he had in store for her this time. *As long as it's not more tickling*, she thought with a little giggle. "All right, what is it, Simba?" she asked, cocking her head to the side.

Simba grinned in response, and reached behind his back with a paw, pulling out a little baby cub. "Look, Nala, it's a baby!"

Nala's eyes widened. "*What?*"

"I've got a baby," he replied, still grinning. *She's going to love this!* he assured himself. *She'll be all over the little guy in a second. She loves cute things!*

There was a long moment of silence before Nala finally spoke again. "We don't want a baby," she said seriously. "Get rid of it. We're happy as we are. Why spoil everything? We'll drift apart. I mean, it's bound to come between us."

The expression on Simba's face turned serious also, as he hugged the baby tightly, clutching it against his chest. "Well, I think that it's come between us already. Come on, Nala, it's time we faced up to our responsibilities. We can't carry on having fun all the time. Besides, it's a fact now, we have to deal with it."

Nala frowned. "Why couldn't you have been more careful?" Nala got closer to Simba, looking over the tiny baby he was cradling in his paws. She smiled. "Aw... he's very cute, isn't he?" she said, ruffling the top of the baby's head. He was such an adorable little thing!

Simba raised an eyebrow. "I thought you didn't like the idea of me having a baby?" he said, confused.

She gave him a look. "I was only joking, Simba. I love him already. But, of course, there is just one tiny, little, it'sy-bitsy thing I have to ask you." Nala smiled, gazed into his eyes and cleared her throat. "*Where the heck did you get a baby from?*" she shouted at the top of her voice, causing Simba to fall onto his back in surprise.

Simba shook his head, gathering his senses back. "I found it," he replied, getting to his paws and checking to see if the baby was all right. He had fallen fast asleep in Simba's embrace, sucking on one of his paws in his sleep. "In that rocky field over there."

"You *found* a baby?" Nala exclaimed. "Somehow, Simba, I find that really hard to believe. I bet you kidnapped it, didn't you? It's another one of those 'cool things' you do to try and impress me. Well, I don't call them 'cool things'. I call them 'crazy things'!"

"Nala, I really *did* find him!" Simba insisted. "He was just lying in a bunch of rocks, all on his own."

Nala looked down at the baby. "How did you find him?" she asked.

"I'm surprised you didn't hear the crying," he told her. "I'd be able to hear it from miles away. All I did was follow the sound and there he was. He must have been lying there for a few hours."

"Where do you think his parents are?" Nala wondered. "Why do you think they'd just leave him there like that? The poor little guy. I wouldn't like to be left out there like that."

"Maybe they didn't leave him there?" Simba suggested. "That's what I thought, anyway," he said as he scratched the top of his head.

Nala narrowed her eyes. "Okay, then, Mister I'm-The-Perfect-Dad. What do you think happened to him?"

"I think he got separated from his mother," Simba told her. "Who would want to leave a cute little guy like him out there all on his own? Unless he has the worst parents in the world, I think he just got lost."

Nala shrugged. "You could be right. But... what do you want us to do with him, exactly?"

"I thought we could look after him," Simba explained. "We can be his Mommy and Daddy for the day."

"*Us?*" Nala exclaimed in surprise. "You want *us* to look after him? Since when did we know *anything* about being parents?"

"He likes me," Simba replied simply. "That's good enough for me. I think we can handle it. It'll only be for a day or two until his mother comes here to take him back with her."

Nala put a paw to her chin, thinking this over for a moment. It was a bit of a crazy idea, but it was only for a day or so. Surely it couldn't be that much trouble to take care of a single baby?

"Well... okay," she agreed. "We'll take care of him for a day. I mean, it can't be *that* hard to look after him, can it? But before we do anything, we'll have to decide what we're going to call him. We can't just spend the day calling him 'baby'."

"I guess you're right. How about... Malka?" Simba suggested. "That sounds like a good name."

"Nah. That's a terrible name. Sounds like the name some lying jerk would have. How about... Kiara?" she suggested, earning a confused reaction from Simba.

"Nala, that's a girls' name," he reminded her, causing her to frown in response.

"I know," she said, sounding rather disappointed. "But it's a nice name that I really wanted to use."

"Maybe some other time," Simba muttered, before trying to think of another name for the baby. "How about Simba II?"

"Simba, we're not naming the baby after you," she told him firmly.

"Aw, but it sounds so cool!" he argued. "What if we end up having to look after him for ever, and he becomes the future King? King Simba II. That sounds so awesome!"

"Simba, no. Think of something that's, you know, a little original." Nala thought of another name. "I've got it! What about Mheetu?"

"That sound like something you would name your brother," Simba remarked. "If you had one."

"Well, at least it's better than Simba III!" she shot back angrily.

"Look, shall we just name the baby Kopa?" Simba said, hoping this would put an end to the naming argument.

Nala considered it for a moment. "Kopa?" she said, finding herself taking a liking to the name. "Yeah... I like it. That's a good name. No, it's a *great* name. I'm surprised I didn't think of that before!"

"It just proves that I'm the master at naming babies," he said cockily, raising his eyebrows.

Just when the two cubs had overcome the problem of naming the baby, he started to cry.

AN: Oh, dear. A crying baby is never a good sign. How are our two favourite cubs going to solve this problem? Will they be good parents or crack under the pressure? You may find out tomorrow...

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: Problems

AN: Time for our story to come to an end. But hey, the last chapter's always a long one, so it's not all bad news, right?

Chapter Seven: Problems

Simba and Nala looked down at the baby – who they had now named Kopa – and watched as he continued to cry. Nala looked up at Simba, an eyebrow raised. "What now, *Dad*?"

Simba shrugged and chuckled. "I think the *mother* can take care of the crying," he replied, handing Kopa over to Nala.

She frowned in response. Oh, so now Simba was going to try and make *her* take care of the baby? "How come *I* have to take care of Kopa while he's crying? I've got a lot of other things to do today! You can't expect me to look after the baby all the time!"

"I figured you'd need some time to get to know each other," Simba told her. "You might want to stop him crying first, though."

"But *how* do I stop him crying?" Nala asked, rocking Kopa gently back and forth in her paws. "I don't know what he wants!"

"Moms are supposed to know *everything* the baby needs," Simba informed her. Nala didn't look very impressed.

"Well, sorry, Simba, but I haven't exactly ever *had* a baby before!" she exclaimed. "If you're so smart then why can't *you* take care of him?"

Simba rolled his eyes in response. "Look, we just need to find out what's making him cry. It shouldn't take too long to figure something like that out. Give him here." Simba took Kopa from Nala and looked him over. "He looks fine. Maybe he's just... hungry?"

"Hungry?" said Nala. "If he's hungry, then what are we going to feed him with?"

"There's only one thing we can do," Simba replied. "I'll stay here and look after Kopa, while you run off and hunt some food for him to eat."

"Simba, it may have escaped your notice that I'm a cub, and don't exactly have the strength to *take down some antelope for Kopa to eat!*" she exclaimed angrily. "Maybe you could, you know, think of something that actually makes *sense!*"

"Okay, okay. Just get him some leaves or something," Simba muttered, causing Nala's eyes to go wide in disbelief.

"Are you serious?" Nala said exasperatedly. "We can't feed him leaves!"

"Why not?" Simba replied, confused. "What's wrong with leaves? He needs to eat healthy food if he wants to grow up to be big and strong like me."

"Simba, there are two problems with your suggestion. One: you hate *anything* that's the slightest bit healthy. And two: you're not big or strong, and you're only eight months old. How does that make you grown up?"

"It's still food," Simba pointed out. "Or do you want him to keep crying for the rest of the day? You don't want to make poor little Kopa upset, do you? Just think of what his *real* mother will say when she finds out how poorly you've treated her baby. She might even feed *you* to him as a punishment."

Nala sighed. "Fine. He can eat some leaves. If we're lucky then there might even be some fruit lying around the place."

Simba gagged, disgusted. "Please don't mention fruit in front of me. It makes me feel sick."

"So much for all that 'healthy eating' talk," Nala remarked as she walked away. "I'll be back in about five minutes. Don't go anywhere."

"Believe me, I won't," Simba assured her. "It's my mission to look after our adoptive son!" Simba watched Nala leave, and then looked down at Kopa. "I don't suppose you'll stop crying, by any chance, huh?"

Kopa cried even harder.

"That's what I thought."

Having wandered around the Pride Lands for the last ten minutes, Nala finally found a suitable tree she could take some leaves from. It was a tree with low branches protruding from it, all of them with leaves. Nala plucked a few clean-looking ones from a branch and looked them over. "This should do," she said, before turning around and heading back towards the water hole, where Simba was looking after baby Kopa.

At least, that was what she *hoped*.

When Nala returned to the water hole, the worst thing that could have possibly happened... happened.

Simba looked very nervous and upset, and Nala could see just by looking at him that he had been crying. Kopa was nowhere to be seen, and Nala suspected that Simba had something to do with this. "Simba, dear, where's our darling little son?" she asked him, smiling innocently.

Simba chuckled skittishly. "Well... it's funny you should ask about little Kopa, because..."

Nala frowned. Okay, now she was *sure* that Simba had something to do with this. Well, that was just great! "Simba..." she said, glaring at him.

Simba suddenly began to break down, not even bothering to use an excuse now. "I couldn't help it, Nala! As soon as you left Kopa started to cry even louder, and then I tripped over, and he stopped crying, but then I got up, and he started crying again, and then he walked off, and now *I'm* crying!" Simba burst into tears, sobbing.

"Simba, control yourself!" Nala exclaimed, slapping him hard on the face. He immediately stopped crying, his eyes wide.

"Yes, ma'am," Simba obeyed, giving Nala a salute. "What is your first order?"

"Simba, what happened to the baby?" Nala asked.

"I can't find him!" Simba exclaimed in distress. "I looked all over the water hole, but he's not here! He's probably wandered off to the Outlands, where he'll be..." Simba gasped in horror. "Eaten by crocodiles. Really hungry ones, too."

"Why couldn't you just keep the baby in your sights until I got back, Simba?" she asked. Did he always have to overcomplicate things all the time? He just couldn't leave the baby to cry for a few minutes, could he?

"I just wanted to stop him crying," Simba responded. "I thought it would have made things a little better."

"So I collected all these leaves for nothing!" Nala exclaimed, throwing all the leaves she collected from the tree to the ground. "We have to find the baby, Simba. Because if we don't, then his mother's gonna ask us some pretty searching questions when she finds her son lying face down in a river somewhere."

"Yeah..." Simba said, a worried look appearing on his face. "She might beat us up."

"And cut our bodies into a thousand different pieces," Nala said, horrified.

"And skin us alive," Simba continued, wide-eyed with fear.

"Yes, and then put on our skins!" Nala exclaimed.

"Yeah, and slowly rip apart our still twitching corpses."

"And eat our livers!"

"And drink our blood! Yeah, and then do weird sort of dancing, flapping our skins around the place, and smearing the walls of caves with our throbbing disintegrating brains!"

There was a long moment of silence between the two cubs.

"Not much of an option really, is it?" said Nala.

"Not really, no. We'd better find Kopa, and fast! His mother could arrive here looking for him any minute now!" Simba paced back and forth, thinking. "Now if I were a baby, where would I go?"

"Somewhere exciting," Nala concluded. "At least, somewhere exciting to a baby. Simba, when you were a baby, where was the one place you always wanted to go?"

Simba grinned. "Oh, I always wanted to climb up to the top of Pride Rock and jump off."

Nala laughed back at him. "Well, *that* would have been a stupid thing to do! That would have killed you! You'd go *splat!* as soon as you hit the ground!"

Simba joined in with the laughter, and they continued to laugh in amusement for a few more seconds. That was when they realised something quite horrific.

Nala's eyes widened in horror, and she slowly turned to look at Simba. "You don't think...?" she said in a worried tone.

"That Kopa might want to climb to the top of Pride Rock and jump off?" Simba finished for her.

Nala slowly nodded. "Yes."

There was another moment of silence, before Simba called out at the top of his voice. "*Don't worry, Kopa! Daddy's coming!*"

Simba sprinted off away from the water hole, leaving Nala standing there on her own, her eyes narrowed. "Simba!" she called after him.

Simba skidded to a halt and turned around. "What?" he called back.

"Pride Rock's that way," she said, pointing to the left.

Simba frowned and ran back towards Nala, unable to believe that he'd made such a silly mistake. Why was it when lives were at stake Simba suddenly got stupider?

"Come on!" he shouted as he pulled Nala along. "We have to get to Kopa before... Well, you know."

"*Splat?*" Nala finished for him, a concerned expression on her face.

Simba nodded. "That's right," he said. "*Splat.*"

"Tojo, you can stop thanking me," Tama told Tojo as they made their way towards the den at Pride Rock. All he seemed to do now was thank her for freeing him. What did he think she was going to do? Make him her slave again if he didn't? It didn't work like that. Their business was concluded now. They were just partners, and nothing more.

"I can't help it!" Tojo exclaimed, overjoyed that he was no longer Tama's obedient slave. "I've never felt so happy in my entire life! I'm free again!"

"And *why* are you so happy?" Tama wondered. Surely she couldn't have been *that* bad when Tojo was her slave. The only she made him do was... everything. Actually, come to think of it, she had overworked the poor cub.

"All my life I've had nothing but bad luck, Tama," Tojo explained. "First my whole pride burns to the ground, then I become your slave, and you make me do everything you wanted me to. But now everything's gonna change!" he exclaimed, a happy grin forming on his face. "Things are finally looking up!"

"Out of the way!" a voice called as Tojo was knocked to the ground, grunting in pain. "This is an emergency!"

"Hi, Simba," Tama called in a dreamy voice as he rushed past her with Nala. "Ooh, he's so cute! Don't you think so, too, Tojo?"

Tojo sat up, a dazed expression on his face. He couldn't see anything but stars spinning around. "Did anyone see that stampeding wildebeest?" he said before fainting.

"This way!" Simba called to Nala, as he ran up Pride Rock, diving onto the edge of the famous rock structure and looking down to see if Kopa had been curious enough to climb up there. "Oh, no," Simba said in a worried tone, looking back at Nala.

Nala gulped, picking up on the worry. "Let me guess," she said. "*Splat?*"

Simba shook his head. "No. He's not there."

Nala breathed a sigh of relief. "Phew. That was a close one! For a second there I thought he'd fallen from the edge!"

"Yeah, but we still don't know where he is!" Simba exclaimed worriedly. "There are hundreds of cliffs around here! He could have jumped off any one of them!" Simba clutched his chest, breathing heavily. "I think I'm having a heart attack... Yep, I was right!"

Simba collapsed onto his back, taking deep breaths in and out. He couldn't take this anymore! Taking care of a baby was just too stressful for him! It was better to leave the childcare to responsible adults!

"Aw... who's a cute little baby?"

Simba's eyes widened when he heard that voice. Getting to his paws and looking back towards the den, Simba saw something very, very odd.

"No way..." Simba said in amazement as he bounded back down Pride Rock and towards the den opening.

Nala followed his gaze, and her mouth dropped open in surprise. "That's just... crazy!" she exclaimed, following after Simba.

Simba skidded to a halt in the den, and he was so surprised that his mouth could have dropped to the ground!

Kopa was in the den, all right. That wasn't what surprised Simba. What surprised him was that Kopa was being rocked back and forth gently in the paws of Shenzi, with Banzai sitting right beside her.

"What a cute little guy!" Banzai exclaimed, ruffling the top of Kopa's head. The baby cub giggled in response.

Simba cleared his throat loudly. "Excuse me, but I think you'll find that's *our* baby!" he said, snatching Kopa away from the two hyenas. "Come on, Nala. Let's get out of here!"

Simba put Kopa on his back and stormed off. Nala shrugged at Shenzi and Banzai before following after him. "I was enjoying that," Banzai said, disappointed.

"We could always try for a baby?" Shenzi suggested, earning a grin from Banzai in response.

"You're on."

"I don't believe it!" Simba exclaimed as he and Nala sat by the water hole again, watching Kopa roll around on the floor attentively. They weren't letting him out of their sight, they had decided. Not until his mother came back to collect him. "I can't believe those hyenas stole him!"

"It could have been worse," Nala told him, thinking optimistically. "I mean, they could have eaten him."

"At least we've got him back," Simba said, gathering up Kopa in his paws and cuddling him. "I don't know what we would have done otherwise."

Someone cleared their throat from behind the two cubs, and they turned around to find themselves looking at a friendly lioness with tanned fur and blue eyes. "Excuse me, but I think you have my baby."

Simba grinned. "Please tell me you're his mother! *Please!*" he begged. He'd had enough stress for one day!

The lioness nodded. "I'm Kirafiki, and that's my son, Kidogo," she told them, pointing at her son. "He wandered off while we were walking through the jungle. He always likes exploring places. I'm so glad I've found him!"

Simba held up the baby for Kirafiki to take. She cradled the baby gently in her paws. "There, there, Kidogo. Mommy's here for you." She looked at Simba and Nala, smiling warmly. "Did you two look after him?"

Simba grinned and nodded. "Yeah! We looked after him all day!"

"I hope he wasn't any trouble."

"Well—" Simba was about to speak, when Nala nudged him hard.

"No," she interrupted, grinning innocently. "No trouble at all. He was a little angel."

"Well... thank you," she told the two. "I can't express how grateful I am! Kidogo is all I have. I don't know what I would have done if I lost him."

"We're happy to help," Simba said, pleased with himself that he'd managed to look after the child.

"Thanks again. I think you two will grow up to be *excellent* parents one day," she told them, before turning around and heading away, placing her cub on her back.

Simba looked at Nala and smiled, putting his paw around her shoulder as they watched the two leave. Kidogo popped up and grinned at the two cubs. "Bye, Mommy and Daddy!" he called to the two.

Simba and Nala looked at each other, stunned. "I think he just said his first words," Nala said, amazed.

Simba smiled back at her, hugging her close to him. "Our little man is growing up."

"Simba?" said Nala, looking up at him. "Do you think we'll ever have a cub of our own one day?"

"Maybe," Simba replied, a little grin forming in his face. "I'll remember that name," he told her.

"Name?" Nala narrowed her eyes in confusion. "What name?"

"Kiara," Simba replied. "We might need to use it someday, if we ever do... have a cub."

Nala nuzzled his chest affectionately. *Oh, I'm counting on it, Simba*, she thought to herself. *I most certainly am.*

"So, did I die?" Tojo asked Tama, having finally woken up from being knocked unconscious by Simba earlier that afternoon.

"No, but you were unconscious for seven hours," Tama informed him, gesturing towards the den entrance. Pale moonlight shone through into the den. "See? It's the middle of the night."

"Great," Tojo mumbled. "There wasn't really much point in me waking up. I might as well go back to sleep now." He sighed, collapsed onto his back in the little corner of the den he slept in, and closed his eyes. Tama lay beside him, and closed her own eyes to go to sleep.

"Hey, Tama?" Tojo called, opening his eyes and rolling over to look at her.

"Yes, Tojo?" she replied, looking back at him,

"We're friends, aren't we?"

"Huh?"

"Are we friends?"

Tama rolled her eyes. "I suppose so," she said, trying to sound annoyed.

"Oh. Good." Tojo closed his eyes again.

"Why?" Tama enquired, curious.

"No reason," he replied quickly. "I was just... wondering, that's all."

"Don't expect me to like it," she told him, closing her eyes. *Even though I do... kind of like it. Not that I'd tell you that, though.*

The End

AN: Aw... that was lovely, wasn't it? It's a shame things are going to take a turn for the worse for Tama in the next story, when she starts to go a little loopy. Thanks everyone for reading the story, and a special thank you to all those who reviewed. See you soon!

NEXT TIME: Tama discovers that Nala is Simba's girlfriend, and hatches a plot to make Simba hers... *for ever.*